

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of each claim that has been introduced in the above-referenced application is identified in the ensuing listing of the claims. This listing of the claims replaces all previously submitted claims listings.

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising:
a polishing pad;
a subpad support located adjacent saidthe polishing pad, saidthe subpad support including a subpad retention element; and
a substantially planar subpad located between saidthe subpad support and saidthe polishing pad and removably secured to saidthe subpad support by way of saidthe subpad retention element while ~~remaining unsecured relative to said supporting the polishing pad without being secured thereto.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein saidthe polishing pad comprises one of a web format polishing pad and a belt format polishing pad.

3. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein saidthe subpad retention element comprises a clamp configured to retain at least a portion of a periphery of saidthe subpad.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein saidthe subpad retention element comprises negative pressure applicable to a bottom surface of saidthe subpad through saidthe subpad support.

5. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein saidthe subpad retention element mechanically engages a complementary structure on or adjacent to a bottom surface of saidthe subpad.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a substantially rigid structure on a bottom surface of saidthe subpad.

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein saidthe substantially rigid structure is secured to saidthe bottom surface of saidthe subpad.

8. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein saidthe substantially rigid structure comprises a polymer.

9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein saidthe substantially rigid structure comprises a metal.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein saidthe substantially rigid structure comprises a dense region of saidthe subpad at saidthe bottom surface thereof.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein saidthe subpad support comprises at least one lip configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of a subpad assembled with and secured to saidthe subpad support.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein saidthe at least one lip substantially completely laterally surrounds a peripheral edge of saidthe subpad.

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a bottom surface of saidthe subpad is substantially free of adhesive material.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, including a subpad access element.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein saidthe subpad access element is configured to at least partially move saidthe polishing pad away from saidthe subpad support.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein saidthe subpad access element moves a polishing pad support so as to at least partially move saidthe polishing pad away from saidthe subpad support.

17. (Currently Amended) A subpad support for use in an apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising a subpad retention element for retaining a substantially planar subpad which is configured to support at least a portion of a polishing pad of the apparatus but not configured to be secured relative to the polishing pad.

18. (Currently Amended) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein saidthe subpad retention element is configured to removably retain the subpad.

19. (withdrawn) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein saidthe subpad retention element mechanically engages a corresponding feature on or adjacent to a bottom surface of the subpad.

20. (Currently Amended) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein saidthe subpad retention element is configured to apply a negative pressure to a bottom surface of the subpad.

21. (withdrawn) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein saidthe subpad retention element comprises a clamp element configured to engage at least a portion of a periphery of a subpad assembled with the subpad support.

22. (Original) The subpad support of claim 17, comprising a lip configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of a subpad assembled with the subpad support.

23. (Currently Amended) The subpad support of claim 22, wherein saidthe lip is configured to substantially completely surround a peripheral edge of saidthe subpad.

24-39. (cancelled)

40. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising:
a polishing pad;
a subpad support located adjacent saidthe polishing pad, saidthe subpad support including a substantially planar subpad support surface and a subpad retention element associated with saidthe subpad support surface; and
a subpad disposed on saidthe subpad support surface so as to be positionable between saidthe subpad support and saidthe polishing pad without being secured to saidthe polishing pad, saidthe subpad retention element being configured to removably secure saidthe subpad support on saidthe subpad support surface.

41. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein saidthe subpad retention element comprises negative pressure applicable to a backing of saidthe subpad through saidthe subpad support.

42. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein saidthe subpad retention element mechanically engages a complementary structure on or adjacent to a bottom surface of saidthe subpad.

43. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein saidthe subpad support comprises at least one lip configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of a subpad assembled with and secured to saidthe subpad support.

44. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 43, wherein saidthe at least one lip substantially completely laterally surrounds a peripheral edge of saidthe subpad.

45. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein a backing of saidthe subpad is substantially free of adhesive material.

46. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 40, including a subpad access element.

47. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 46, wherein saidthe subpad access element is configured to at least partially move saidthe polishing pad away from saidthe subpad support.

48. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 46, wherein saidthe subpad access element moves a polishing pad support so as to at least partially move saidthe polishing pad away from saidthe subpad support.

49. (Currently Amended) A subpad support for use in an apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising:
a substantially planar support surface configured to receive a subpad; and
a subpad retention element associated with saidthe support surface so as to retain the subpad in position thereon ~~while maintaining the subpad in nonsecured relation relative to so as to support~~ a polishing pad of the apparatus without being secured to the polishing pad.

50. (Currently Amended) The subpad support of claim 49, wherein saidthe subpad retention element is configured to removably retain the subpad.

51. (withdrawn) The subpad support of claim 49, wherein ~~said~~the subpad retention element mechanically engages a corresponding feature on or adjacent to a bottom surface of the subpad.

52. (Currently Amended) The subpad support of claim 49, comprising wherein ~~said~~the subpad retention element is configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of the subpad.

53. (Currently Amended) The subpad support of claim 52, wherein ~~said~~the subpad retention element is configured to substantially completely surround a peripheral edge of the subpad.

54. (Currently Amended) The subpad support of claim 49, wherein ~~said~~the subpad retention element is configured to apply a negative pressure to a bottom surface of the subpad.